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Statement submitted by Global Helping to Advance Women and Children, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.5/2012/1.

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Statement

Empowering families to help reduce poverty and hunger

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society.

The outcome documents of numerous United Nations conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Conference on Human Settlements and the World Summit for Children, call for strengthening the family as the basic unit of society.

In his 2010 report on the follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond (A/66/62-E/2011/4), the Secretary-General stated that the majority of the Millennium Development targets, especially those relating to the reduction of poverty, education of children and reduction in maternal mortality, were difficult to attain unless the strategies to achieve them focused on the family, that the very achievement of development goals depended on how well families were empowered to contribute to the achievement of those goals and that policies focusing on improving the well-being of families were certain to benefit development.

Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development. Many United Nations documents further state that husband and wife should be equal partners in providing a sustainable livelihood for their family.

According to the report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, female-headed households, including divorced, separated and unmarried women and widows, are at particular risk of poverty.

Global Helping to Advance Women and Children calls upon the United Nations system, including relevant agencies, funds and programmes, in accordance with their respective mandates, to recognize and promote the role of the family in their work towards reducing poverty and hunger.

We encourage all Member States to promote the participation, consultation, inclusion and integration of the family in programmes to reduce poverty and hunger.

We encourage concerned intergovernmental, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector to engage in cooperative arrangements that aim at providing the necessary technical and expert assistance to enhance the capacities of the family unit to reduce poverty and hunger.

We request that Governments consider changes in law and policy to ensure men's responsibility to and financial support for their children and families. Such laws and policies should also encourage maintenance or reconstitution of the family unit.

We stress the need to enhance accountability in the work of mainstreaming the family into the development agenda, including an assessment of the impact of development efforts on the family unit and the involvement of the family towards achieving the reduction of poverty and hunger.

We call upon the organizers of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family to provide adequate focus on available data and best practices showing how the family unit has achieved and can achieve the reduction of poverty and hunger.